

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 05723 121058Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 5723

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: GOP COMPLAINTS OF BIASED FOREIGN PRESS COVERAGE OF
ELECTIONS

REF: MANILA 5706

1. SUMMARY: MALACANANG INSIDER COMPLAINED TO CPAO ABOUT "BAD PRESS" GOP IS GETTING ON ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN NEW YORK TIMES. SHE ALSO REPEATED CHARGES THAT FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WERE TAKING PART IN OPPOSITION STRATEGY SESSIONS. AP CORRESPONDENT HAS TOLD EMBASSY LOCAL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION IS CONSIDERING NYT'S BUTTERFIELD'S REQUEST FOR PROTEST TO GOP ON HIS BEHALF. BUTTERFIELD TOLD EMBOFF HE AND WP'S JAY MATTHEWS WERE DRESSED DOWN BY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION FOR "INTERFERENCE" AND MISREPORTING. BUTTERFIELD IS CONCERNED THAT HE AND OTHERS WILL BE EXPELLED AND THAT LOCAL STRINGERS MAY BE PERSECUTED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH CPAO APRIL 11, CARMEN GUERRERO NAKPIL, AMATEUR HISTORIAN AND CONSTANT COMPANION OF MRS. MARCOS, COMPLAINED ABOUT THE "BAD PRESS" THE PHILIPPINES IS GETTING IN THE US REGARDING THE ELECTIONS. SHE SAID NEW YORK TIMES AND WALL STREET JOURNAL STORIES TELEXED TO MALACANANG WERE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 05723 121058Z

FULL OF "OUTRAGEOUS LIES." SHE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY FOX BUTTERFIELD OF NEW YORK TIMES AND MIKE MALOY OF WALL STREET JOURNAL.

3. NAKPIL COMPLAINED THAT FOREIGN NEWSMEN GOT ALL THEIR INFORMATION FROM THE OPPOSITION AND IGNORED KBL OFFICIALS WHO WERE CERTAINLY AVAILABLE TO THEM. THEY EVEN TOOK PART IN

SPECIAL MEETING WHERE STRATEGY WAS MADE, ENCOURAGING THE OPPOSITION TO STAGE DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH WOULD ASSURE THEM GOOD COPY AND THE KINDS OF ANGLES THEY WANTED. SHE SAID THAT FOREIGN NEWSMEN (SPECIFICALLY FOX BUTTERFIELD) WERE ACTUALLY INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN THE ELECTION PROCESS, "WHICH IS ILLEGAL, YOU KNOW."

4. NAKPIL AGREED THAT NEWSWEEK AND TIME STORIES LAST WEEK WERE "QUITE GOOD," BUT CONTINUED:"BUT NOW THIS; THESE VISITING CORRESPONDENTS AS WELL AS THE RESIDENT ONES SEEM TO HAVE TURNED. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE TRYING TO DO OR WHAT THEY WANT US TO DO."

5. AP CORRESPONDENT BILLY MANN TOLD CPAO APRIL 11 THAT BUTTERFIELD HAD SENT LETTER TO LOCAL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION PROTESTING HIS TREATMENT BY OFFICIALS AT ONE OF THE POLLING STATIONS (MANILA 5513). BUTTERFIELD ASKED FOCAP TO PROTEST TO GOP ON HIS BEHALF; FOCAP IS CONSIDERING THE REQUEST.

6. IN LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS APRIL 12, BUTTERFIELD RECOUNTED A MEETING APRIL 11 WITH LORENZO CRUZ OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION. CRUZ COMPLAINED TO BUTTERFIELD THAT HE HAD RELIED ON LABAN SOURCES FOR ELECTION INFORMATION AND IGNORED GOP SOURCES; THAT HE HAD WRITTEN INACCURATE STORIES; THAT HE HAD INTERFERED IN THE VOTE-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 05723 121058Z

COUNTING PROCEDURES; AND THAT THE FOREIGN PRESS (UNSPECIFIED) HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE PLANNING OF THE APRIL 8 LABAN DEMONSTRATION WHICH RESULTED IN MASS ARRESTS. BUTTERFIELD REPLIED THAT GOP OFFICIALS WERE OFTEN UNAVAILABLE; THAT THE KBL POSITION WERE ADEQUATELY COVERED BY LOCAL MEDIA; AND THAT THE OPPOSITION VIEW COULD ONLY BE GOTTEN AT THEIR RALLIES OR AT THEIR HEADQUARTERS. BUTTERFIELD ASKED CRUZ FOR SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF INTERFERENCE, BUT CRUZ DID NOT PROVIDE ANY. BUTTERFIELD DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT PLANNING ANY DEMONSTRATIONS.

7. CRUZ TOLD BUTTERFIELD THAT HE AND JAY MATTHEWS OF WASHINGTON POST WERE THE TWO MOST OBVIOUS MALEFACTORS, AND PRESIDENT MARCOS WAS PERSONALLY UPSET WITH THE STORIES THEY HAD WRITTEN. CRUZ ASKED BUTTERFIELD TO PASS HIS REMARKS ON TO MATTHEWS, SINCE HE WOULD NOT HAVE TIME TO MEET WITH HIM SEPARATELY.

8. BUTTERFIELD TOLD EMBOFFS MARCOS HAS MET WITH HIS NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL FOR SEVERAL HOURS IN THE PAST TWO DAYS, CONSIDERING WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE HOSTILE FOREIGN MEDIA. HE AND OTHER NON-FILIPINOS, HE SAID, MAY EITHER BE EXPELLED

OR NOT PERMITTED TO RETURN. HIS STRINGER, ALICE VILLADOLID, HAS BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT ALL HER COPY FROM PAST MONTHS FOR INSPECTION TO SEE IF SHE WROTE ANYTHING SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION. VALLADOLID, BUTTERFIELD SAID, HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY CONNECTION WITH THE ELECTION, BUT THE GOP, IN ITS CURRENT MOOD, MAY FIND SOMETHING TO CRITICIZE. (A SUBSEQUENTREPORT INDICATES VILLADOLID HAS BEEN CLEARED OF ANY WRONGDOING BUT WAS ADVISED TO "TAKE A VACATION IN BAGUIO.")

9. BUTTERFILED ALSO REPORTED THAT A CONTACT OF HIS AT DPI WAS GRILLED BY HER SUPERIORS FOR SEVERAL HOURS ABOUT HIM AND WAS TOLD THAT BUTTERFIELD WAS NOT "A REAL CORRESPONDENT."
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MANILA 05723 121058Z

10. BUTTERFIELD SAID HIS HOME OFFICE WAS CONCERNED THAT HE MIGHT BE EXPELLED AND ASKED WHAT THE EMBASSY POSITION WOULD BE IF HE WAS. EMBOFF TOLD HIM THE INITIAL REQUEST FOR ACTION SHOULD COME FROM HIS NEW YORK OFFICE, WHICH SHOULD MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT. AT THAT POINT, THE USG WOULD DECIDE WHAT ACTION TO TAKE.
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